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IN THE CLAIMS:

Amended claims follow:

1. (currently amended) A method performed by a provider of a computer file to trigger updating of said computer file used by a computer in a database of computers, said method comprising the steps of:

(i)   providing an updated version of said computer file at a location from which it may be downloaded by said computer;

(ii)   sending a tag indicative of availability of said updated computer file to said database of computers utilizing email addresses associated with computers in said database such that said tag is sent to said computers in said database utilizing said email addresses; and

(iii)   maintaining said database of computers to which said tag is to be sent when an updated version of said computer file is made available, wherein said database of computers includes priority data indicating a priority level associated with an address, said priority level being used to control how rapidly after said updated version of said computer file is made available said tag is sent to said database of computers, said priority level controlling selection of one of a plurality of different finite delay periods after said updated version of said computer file is made available following which said tag is sent to said database of computers;

wherein said tag includes data indicative of a version level of said computer file, data indicative of a version level of a software program associated with said computer

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file, and data indicative of a version level of an engine associated with said software program:

wherein said tag is encrypted;

wherein said tag is part of an e-mail message header;

wherein sending said tag to said database of computers further comprises:

transmitting said tag through at least one local server and at least one mail gateway connected to said computers in said database such that said at least one local server reads said tag to determine if said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is more recent than a second version level of a computer file located on said at least one local server, and further such that said at least one mail gateway reads said tag to determine if said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is more recent than a third version level of a computer file located on said at least one mail gateway;

if said tag includes data indicative of a more recent version level than said second version level of said computer file located on said at least one local server, said at least one local server initiating a download of said computer file associated with said tag; and

if said tag includes data indicative of a more recent version level than said third version level of said computer file located on said at least one mail gateway, said at least one mail gateway initiating a download of said computer file associated with said tag.

2. (cancelled)

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3. (cancelled)

4. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said computer is connected to said location via an internet link.

5. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein computer file is computer virus definition data.

6. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said computer file is an anti-virus computer program file.

7. (cancelled)

8. (cancelled)

9. (cancelled)

10. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein sending of said tag upon availability of an updated version of said computer file is provided as a subscription service by said provider.

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11. (currently amended) A computer program product recorded on a computer

readable medium for use by a provider of a computer file to trigger updating of said

computer file used by a computer said provider having provided an updated version of

said computer file at a location from which it may be downloaded by said computer, said

computer program product comprising:

(i)   tag sending code operable to send a tag indicative of availability of said

updated computer file to said computer utilizing an email address associated with said

computer such that said tag is sent to said computer utilizing said email address; and

(ii)   database code operable to maintain a database of computers to which said

tag is to be sent when an updated version of said computer file is made available, wherein

said database includes priority data indicating a priority level associated with an address,

said priority level being used to control how rapidly after said updated version of said

computer file is made available said tag is sent to said computer, said priority level

controlling selection of one of a plurality of different finite delay periods after said

updated version of said computer file is made available following which said tag is sent

to said database of computers;

wherein said tag includes data indicative of a version level of said computer file,

data indicative of a version level of a software program associated with said computer

file, and data indicative of a version level of an engine associated with said software

program;

wherein said tag is encrypted;

wherein said tag is part of an e-mail message header;

wherein sending said tag to said computer further comprises:

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transmitting said tag through a local server and a mail gateway connected

to said computer such that said at least one local server reads said tag to determine

if said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is more recent

than a second version level of a computer file located on said at least one local

server, and further such that said at least one mail gateway reads said tag to

determine if said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is more

recent than a third version level of a computer file located on said at least one

mail gateway:

if said tag includes data indicative of a more recent version level than said

second version level of said computer file located on said local server, said local

server initiating a download of said computer file associated with said tag; and

if said tag includes data indicative of a more recent version level than said

third version level of said computer file located on said mail gateway, said mail

gateway initiating a download of said computer file associated with said tag.

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 11, wherein said

computer is connected to said location via an internet link.

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15. (original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 11, wherein computer file is computer virus definition data.

16. (original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 11, wherein said computer file is an anti-virus computer program file.

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (original) A computer program product as claimed in claim 11, wherein sending of said tag upon availability of an updated version of said computer file is provided as a subscription service by said provider.

21. (currently amended) Apparatus for use by a provider of a computer file to trigger updating of said computer file used by a computer said provider having provided an updated version of said computer file at a location from which it may be downloaded by said computer, said apparatus comprising:

    (i)   a tag sender operable to send a tag indicative of availability of said updated computer file to said computer utilizing an email address associated with said computer such that said tag is sent to said computer utilizing said email address; and

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(ii)   database logic operable to maintain a database of computers to which said

tag is to be sent when an updated version of said computer file is made available, wherein

said database includes priority data indicating a priority level associated with an address,

said priority level being used to control how rapidly after said updated version of said

computer file is made available said tag is sent to said computer, said priority level

controlling selection of one of a plurality of different finite delay periods after said

updated version of said computer file is made available following which said tag is sent

to said database of computers;

wherein said tag includes data indicative of a version level of said computer file,

data indicative of a version level of a software program associated with said computer

file, and data indicative of a version level of an engine associated with said software

program;

wherein said tag is encrypted;

wherein said tag is part of an e-mail message header;

wherein sending said tag to said computer further comprises:

transmitting said tag through a local server and a mail gateway connected

to said computer such that said at least one local server reads said tag to determine

if said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is more recent

than a second version level of a computer file located on said at least one local

server, and further such that said at least one mail gateway reads said tag to

determine if said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is more

recent than a third version level of a computer file located on said at least one

mail gateway;

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if said tag includes data indicative of a more recent version level than said second version level of said computer file located on said local server, said local server initiating a download of said computer file associated with said tag; and

if said tag includes data indicative of a more recent version level than said third version level of said computer file located on said mail gateway, said mail gateway initiating a download of said computer file associated with said tag.

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)

24. (original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein said computer is connected to said location via an internet link.

25. (original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein computer file is computer virus definition data.

26. (original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein said computer file is an anti-virus computer program file.

27. (cancelled)

28. (cancelled)

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29. (cancelled)

30. (original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein sending of said tag upon availability of an updated version of said computer file is provided as a subscription service by said provider.

31. (new) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said tag further includes parameter data indicating options previously applied to said e-mail message.

32. (new) A method as claimed in claim 31, wherein said parameter data indicates scan options previously applied to said e-mail message including at least one of scan all files, scan utilizing macro heuristics, and scan utilizing all heuristics.

33. (new) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each computer that receives said tag determines whether said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is more recent than said version level of a computer file located on said each computer, such that if said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is more recent, said each computer that receives said tag further determines whether said data indicative of said version level of said computer file is larger than a threshold number of versions ahead of said version level of said computer file located on said each computer, and if said threshold is met, said message is identified as possibly malicious and said e-mail message is scanned by said each computer.